

**STATEMENT OF A. DURAND JONES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, ON S. 1311, A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE HUDSON-FULTON-CHAMPLAIN 400TH COMMEMORATION COMMISSION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2004**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 1311, a bill to provide for the establishment of the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Commemoration Commission. The Department of the Interior supports this bill, if amended to reduce the number of commission members, to clarify Section (4)(d)(1), and to cap annual appropriations to the Commission.

S. 1311 provides for the establishment of the Commission to undertake activities celebrating the contributions of Henry Hudson, Robert Fulton and Samuel de Champlain to the history of our nation. Henry Hudson, as the master of the vessel Half Moon, was the first European to sail up the river that now bears his name in 1609. In 1807, Robert Fulton navigated up the same river between New York City and Albany in the steamboat *Claremont*, revolutionizing the method of waterborne transportation and influencing forever commerce, the world's navies, and transoceanic travel and trade. The French explorer, Samuel de Champlain, was the first European to discover and explore what is now called Lake Champlain in 1609.

The Commission, composed of thirty-one (31) members, would be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior based, in part, on nominations from the governors of New York,

New Jersey and Vermont and members of Congress from those states whose districts encompass the Hudson River and Champlain Valleys. Nine additional members would also be appointed by the Secretary including the Director of the National Park Service, or her designee, and one other NPS employee with relevant commemoration experience. The National Park Service would also provide administrative assistance to the Commission on a reimbursable basis.

The duties of the Commission are to plan, develop, and execute appropriate commemorative actions, coordinate with federal and state entities, and encourage a wide range of organizations to participate in activities and expand understanding and appreciation of the significance of the voyages of these three men. It is granted broad powers to accomplish these tasks.

The Department recommends several amendments. First, we believe that a thirty-one member commission is too large and would be difficult to establish in a timely manner, would probably not work effectively and efficiently, and would be too costly. We recommend a smaller commission, with perhaps fifteen to seventeen members. We would like to work with the committee to develop an amendment that would reduce the number of commission members while ensuring a continued role for House and Senate members and the Governors from the relevant areas in the selection process. .

Second, section (4)(d)(1) of the bill provides that the Commission may “disperse funds, and accept donations of personal services and real and personal property related to the

Hudson-Fulton-Champlain 2009 and of the significance of Hudson, Fulton, and Champlain in the history of the United States.” We suggest that the word “money,” be inserted between the phrases “donations of” and “personal services” in this subsection. We believe that the Commission should be authorized to accept monetary donations, as well as those other donations to accomplish its tasks.

Third, given other competing priorities and the need to focus federal funds on our parks and other essential programs, we also suggest an amendment to cap the appropriations to the Commission at \$250,000 per year during its period of operation.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I will be happy to answer any questions of members of the Committee.

Proposed amendments to S. 1311

Page 16, line 4, insert the following:

“(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the purposes of this Act not more than \$250,000 for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2010.

“(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts appropriated under this section for any fiscal year shall remain available until December 31, 2010.”

Page 16, line 4: renumber section 4 (i) as section 4 (j).